TOWN OF ARLINGTON

Report of Planning Board

For the Year 1915

REPORT OF THE PLANNING BOARD.

At the annual Town Meeting, Mr. Henry W. Hayes was elected a member of the Board to fill the vacancy caused by the declination of Mr. H. S. Adams to again serve, owing to the pressure of private affairs.

The Board now consists of the following members: Henry W. Hayes, Chairman, Harry G. Porter, James P. Parmenter, Cyrus E. Dallin and Robert W. Pond. On November 11, 1915, Jacob Bitzer was appointed Secretary.

During the year the Board has held meetings at which problems of the future development of the Town have been discussed and preliminary plans outlined.

The Board hesitates to recommend any large improvement to the Town at this time, as the development has not reached the point where such measures are imperative, and particularly from the fact that the Town is already committed to large expenditures for various improvements and extensions of the public service. However, the members of the Planning Board have been active in the Massachusetts Federation of Planning Boards and also in the Council of Fifty, under whose direction a convention and exhibit was held by the Homestead Commission at the State House in November, and have also been in touch with all matters that have come up through State and city authorities bearing on Planning Board subjects and the effect of all discussions, regulations and suggestions having to do with the local conditions.

It is not the policy of the Board to lead the way to extravagant expenditures, but there are some public improvements which the Town must consider in the very near future. Of these, three of the most prominent are, enlargement of school buildings, establishment of building lines on Massachusetts Avenue, between Academy Street and Lowell Street, and better connection with the Mystic Street section from the vicinity of the Town Hall.

At a meeting of the Board held November 18, the Superintendent of Schools appeared before the Board and called attention to the pressing need of providing more school facilities. After consultation with the School Committee, this Board recommends that action be taken as described in detail in the School Committee report, viz.: That the Cutter School be enlarged with as little delay as possible, that sufficient adjoining land be taken for a playground, and that in the near future further accommodations be provided in the Crosby district. These measures are urgent.

The widening of Massachusetts Avenue, from Water Street to Academy Street, has been completed, and the Board is of the opinion that the extension of this widening to Lowell Street should be made possible by the establishment of building lines.

The Planning Board has recommended to the Joint Board that such lines be established under authority given the Joint Board by Section 103, Chapter 48, Acts amended by Chapter 572, R. L. of 1893, which reads as follows:

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE ESTABLISHING OF A BUILDING LINE ON PUBLIC WAYS.

Be it enacted, etc., as follows:

Section 1. The Board or officers' authority to lay out city or town ways may in the manner prescribed by law for giving notice of an intention to lay out any such way, give notice of an intention to establish a building line, parallel to, and not more than twenty-five (25) feet distant from any exterior line of a highway or city or town way, and after said notice may pass a vote establishing such building line, and in case of a city, upon the recording of said vote in the records of the city, or in a town, upon the acceptance of said vote by the inhabitants of the town at a town meeting called as provided by law, said building line shall be established; and until another building line shall thereafter be established in the same manner, no structure shall thereafter be erected, placed or maintained between such building line and such way, except that steps, windows, porticoes and other usual projections appurtenant to the front wall of the building may be allowed in such restricted space, to the extent prescribed in the vote establishing such building line.

Section 2. Any persons sustaining damage by reason of the establishment of such building line shall have the same remedies for obtaining payment therefor as may be prescribed by law for obtaining payment for damages sustained by the laying out of a highway in such city or town.

Section 3. This Act shall take effect in any city when accepted by the City Council thereof, and in any town when accepted by a majority of the legal voters thereof present and voting thereon at a town meeting called for the purpose.

This Act was accepted by the Town at a meeting held on March 31, 1913.

The Board has caused letters to be sent to the abutting owners explaining the objects of this proposition and asking for co-operation, and has been gratified to receive almost unanimous endorsement by the abutting owners. If the Town accepts this recommendation, it is the opinion of the Board that building lines should be established on several other of our main thoroughfares, as this is the only way to secure the possibility of future widening in these thoroughfares without prohibitive expense and to prevent encroachment on existing open spaces.

A better connection to the Mystic Street section from Massachusetts Avenue has been under discussion for some years, and definite plans for the construction of such connection should be decided upon as quickly as possible, with a view to economy in construction, in the taking of land, etc., as well as to the betterment of street railway transportation facilities and the elimination of grade crossings.

The Board has under advisement a plan contemplating the widening of Central Street and the taking of private land so as to connect with Mystic Street near Glen Avenue, connecting also Russell Street with the proposed street and doing away with crossings in Mill Street and Water Street. It is a large matter and varied interests have to be consulted. The Board is making a careful study and after conference with the railroad authorities will be in a position to make a definite recommendation to the Town.

The Planning Board believes it is its duty to act in an advisory capacity and not to interfere with the work of the Departments

of the Town; also to keep closely in touch with the growth and development of the Town, to make suggestions or recommendations from time to time and to prevent the unnecessary expenditure of money now or in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

HENRY W. HAYES, *Chairman,*
HARRY G. PORTER,
JAMES P. PARMENTER,
CYRUS E. DALLIN,
ROBERT W. POND.